

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 30, 2020

Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor
State of Florida
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Dear Governor DeSantis,

We write to again urge you to issue a statewide mask order and to allow county officials to enforce mask mandates on individuals as COVID-19 outbreaks are raging around the country and parts of Florida are seeing a resurgence according to county officials.

Unfortunately, the simple act of wearing a mask to keep our neighbors and communities safe has fallen into a partisan political divide. As the most powerful elected official in our state you can help unite our state and protect us from the health and economic consequences of another spike in cases, hospitalizations, and deaths.

We previously requested that you issue a statewide mask order on June 24, 2020, before the summer's brutal wave of hospitalizations and deaths. At the time, we noted with alarm the state's report of 3,494 cases on June 21. Now, the current seven-day average of reported cases is 3,994 cases per day. Today, the state reported 5,592 new cases, the most in over 10 weeks. In eight of the past 14 days the state has reported a test positivity rate above 5 percent. Daily reported cases are up 40 percent over the past 14 days. Dr. Marissa J. Levine of the University of South Florida called recent trends "fragile stability." Acting now could help protect our state from the next crashing COVID-19 wave.

We ask that you act now to increase the use of masks across the state. Doing so will help avoid a repeat of what we saw this summer: over 10,000 cases reported daily, long lines for sample collection, long delays for test results, and overwhelmed hospitals. We cannot sit by waiting for over 100 Floridians to die every single day from this virus like we saw from mid-July to early September.

Public health officials and other infectious disease experts have long been warning of a severe wave of COVID-19 infections in the fall and winter months. As seasonal residents and holiday visitors weigh the risks of traveling to Florida this year, we should be doing everything we can to slow the rate of community transmission and to require everyone to wear masks when they come to our state.

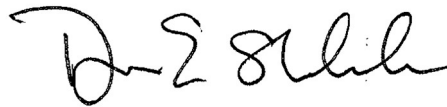
The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are urging Americans to consider the rates of community transmission when deciding whether to host or attend holiday celebrations. While many Americans have already decided to cancel their usual holiday travel plans, requiring mask use can help protect Floridians and those who do choose to visit our state as the rest of the country faces colder temperatures.

Requiring masks is the least you can do to avoid the next COVID-19 wave. One recent study estimates that more than 100,000 lives could be saved nationwide through February if 95 percent of Americans wore masks in public. A statewide mask order and restoring county enforcement authority could help our state avoid devastating health consequences and safely keep schools and businesses open. Please help end the political division around mask use and help keep our constituents safe by issuing a statewide mask order.

Sincerely,



Ted Deutch
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Donna E. Shalala
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



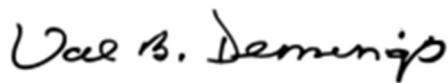
Alcee L. Hastings
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Darren Soto
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Lois Frankel
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Val Demings
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Frederica S. Wilson
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Charlie Crist
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Al Lawson
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Kathy Castor
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steph', with a stylized, flowing script.

Stephanie Murphy
MEMBER OF CONGRESS